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successive head of a major segment memorialized in this way, but the major divisions of his polygynous household as well.

6. *Splitting the State*

When splits occurred in the State, the cleavages were along segmentary, and not age-set, lines. The headquarters of the highest segment was differentiated from the major subdivisions within that segment, and the various divergent groups can be identified by the different segments which they represented. Once fission had taken place, a realignment of segments was sometimes necessary. When after the death of Zwangendaba his great wife's segment was split, in each divergent group the man who was nearest in the line of succession to head her segment claimed to be the rightful heir, and on the strength of that claim assumed leadership of the group.

Fission in the State was the end result of segmentation within it. Here we are using these two terms for two different processes. By segmentation we mean the process by which any social group becomes subdivided internally while retaining its own unity and cohesion. By fission we mean the process by which a social group divides into two or more distinct groups, so that the original group disappears as a social entity.[48] Fission in the Ngoni State occurred without affecting the arrangement of segments within each group, but did disrupt the highest segment of all, within which the divergent groups had hitherto been contained. Segmentation was a process of growth taking place at all levels but particularly at the bottom of the hierarchy of political groups, while fission was a process occurring only at the highest level. The process of segmentation in one generation could not alter the formal arrangement of higher segments determined in the previous generation, even though with each generation there was in fact an effective shift in the distribution of political power accompanied by spatial differentiation. The process of fission did not bring into being any new segments, but merely dissolved the highest segment of all as a cohering political unit. The two processes were thus formally and in reality quite distinct, even though it is clear that they were not independent of one another. Increasing divergence of interest found expression at first in the creation of separate segments and ultimately in the formation of separate states.

The processes of segmentation and of spatial differentiation within the State were in general peaceful. Fission was a hazardous

[48] This use of terms differs from that of Fortes. He uses 'segmentation' to refer to a *state* of internal subdivision within a group, and 'fission' to refer to the *process* of internal subdivision. cf. Fortes, *Web of kinship, passim*. I am indebted to Mrs. U. P. Mayer for this observation.

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631 procedure. Segment 2 broke away from segment 3 and later
193 rejoined it peaceably, but other instances of fission were accom-
662 panied by fighting. The leader of each divergent group rallied his
[669] warriors, the one to protect his flight, the other to pursue and annihilate the departing traitors. If the flight was successful, the leader of the new State assumed the salutations and marks of rank
[643] of a Paramount Chief and held his own first fruits ceremony. The
[786] internal organization of his State and of the one he had left continued on the same lines as before. This seems to have been the sequence of events when Zulu Gama, Ciwele Ndhlovu, and segment 7 each broke away from the main body. When the residue of segment 1 broke away from segment 4, the dissident group destroyed the crops of those who remained, but Chibambo does not mention fighting on that occasion.[42] There are two possible instances of a divergent group going away to join some other state. Segment 7 was associated for a while with Mirambo and his Rugaruga, and Zulu Gama joined forces in Tanganyika with the Maseko Ngoni, now in southern Nyasaland.[44] But neither of these alliances lasted long. As we would expect there is less evidence for the unsuccessful attempts at fission which it seems reasonable to assume must have taken place. I did, however, collect one clear account of a regional governor who was thought by Zwangendaba to be lagging behind on the migration with the intention of deserting with his segment. Zwangendaba sent an army against the regional
[669] governor, who was killed. His segment, under the charge of his son, was forced to live in the village of a lieutenant of Zwangendaba's father. It is said that Zwangendaba continued to punish the would-be rebels by drafting members of the segment to other parts of the residential system from time to time.

Thus in one sense the State was held together by armed force.
641 Certainly there were mystical values associated with the chieftain-
642 ship. It is now difficult to gain much precise information on this
[643] topic but it is apparent from present-day practice and from comparative evidence that the chiefly office was hedged about with mystical sanctions and that the chief was no mere secular ruler. Yet it is also clear that these values were associated with the office of chieftainship rather than with the particular occupant of the office, and that they were linked to successful military achievement. We might also suggest that because so many men became Ngoni only after they had grown up in quite different cultures, mystical

[42] Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 34.
[44] Stanley, *Livingstone*, p. 283, and *Dark Continent*, I, p. 400; Hatchell, 'Angoni', *passim*.

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sanctions were less effective than they are in more homogeneous societies; but this can hardly be proved. The fact remains that some segments did break off, that the State attempted to annihilate them, and that sometimes they were successful, probably sometimes not. The transition was sharp between the condition in which a segment was an integral loyal part of the State and that in which it was itself a new State. Spatially a State was surrounded by a no-man's-land. Everything inside the uninhabited ring of country was in the State, everything outside it was not. Within the State there was no feuding such as sometimes characterizes societies whose political boundaries are not uniquely defined. In Ngoni society, murder was punished by the State, and the cattle paid by the murderer's kin were handed over to the Paramount Chief, not to the kin of the murdered man. The Paramount Chief, it is true, usually handed on the cattle to them, but the method of settlement is indicative of the power of the State. There was only one national first fruits ceremony, accompanied by summary penalties of death for those whose actions threatened its mystical effectiveness, as for example by singing the ceremonial songs at the wrong time. Furthermore, there was a single age-set system, in which the members of each set were drawn from all segments, and because of the activities of the sets, the segments united in aggression against the external world.

When a split threatened, the issue was decided by force of arms. Yet in a quite significant sense the cohesion of the State was not based on force at all. The Paramount Chief had no monopoly of force, for as we have seen there were representatives of every major segment in each age-set, and any lord who could claim the loyal support of his segment had at his disposal a fighting force as efficient as that of anyone else. Within the army there was little or no technical, as distinct from tactical, specialization and the Paramount Chief had no bodyguard or other specially recruited force on which he could rely. The Ngoni were contemptuous of guns, for the Tower muskets used by the Arabs and others could not penetrate their shields at normal firing range, and such guns as the Ngoni possessed were used only for making a noise.[48] There was no strong central power posed against the provincial lords, as in some societies. The strength of any segment was measured by its internal cohesion, its size and fighting ability, as matched against the cohesion, size and ability of the forces that could be marshalled against it. While he was loyal, expansion in a man's segment

[48] Wiese, 'Expedicke', p. 477, and 'Geschichte', p. 196; Read, 'Tradition', p. 461, [illegible]; Young, *History*, p. 185.

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brought more support for his lord; but as the segment expanded his chances of setting himself up as a chief increased and his loyalty became less certain. Thus the appeal to armed force came only as one phase in a general struggle for power carried on simultaneously at many different levels and by a variety of methods. The conflicting ambitions of each lord, each a potential rival of the State, combined to maintain the State and to reduce the likelihood of successful fission.

The conflict between identification with one's lord and differentiation from him, between what Fortes has called the centripetal and centrifugal forces in a segmentary society, is brought out clearly in the enforcement of the death penalty. Wiese implies that only the Paramount Chief had the legal power to sentence adulterers to death and that this offence was the ground for the majority of death sentences.[68] However, my own informants stated that senior lieutenants did sometimes sentence people to death without referring the matter to the Paramount Chief. The Chief would later come to hear of an incident of this kind and would then either praise the lieutenant for acting in the interests of the Chief and for ruling his people well, or else abuse him for usurping the powers of the Chief and warn him to be more careful in future. A successful lieutenant might establish his own major segment and eventually his own State; but if he moved in this direction prematurely he was likely to be killed for treason. This same inherent conflict exists to-day, albeit with different groupings and different sanctions.

7. *Stability*

The most striking differences between the residential system and most lineage systems were the high rate of segmentation, and the flexibility of the system. Segmentation in a lineage system depends basically on the unalterable processes of human reproduction and maturation. Until a man's children become adults his agnatic segment cannot split. The Ngoni, by recruiting many of their members when they were already grown up, were able to increase their population at a prodigious rate and with it the degree of segmentation of the State. As the Ngoni army increased in size, so it became easier for them to capture more people, so that what we may describe as an inflationary spiral in population was set up. The Ngoni State was like a snowball which grows larger and larger as it is pushed from place to place, but still remains uniform throughout. At last it becomes unwieldly and must be broken

[68] Wiese, 'Regelfälle', pp. 471-4, and 'Geschichte', pp. 189-90.

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between rival heirs even while the occupant of the throne was still alive. The brothers Cetshwayo and Mbuyazi fought for the heirship while their father Mpande was still chief.[86]

The apparent ineffectiveness of Mpezeni's rule may well have been due to the increasing segmentation of the State as it expanded and to the growing differentiation of interest between one major segment and another. As it happened, there was no civil war and the tribe did not split, at least not in these terms. A cleavage in the royal house did reveal itself later, in 1903, after British rule had begun, when Madzimawi tried to take the name of Zwangendaba and was opposed by the supporters of Mpezeni II, son of Nsingu. But by then the form of the State was already determined by political forces other than the balanced opposition of segments. It is significant of the changed situation that Madzimawi did not send his armed followers against the new Mpezeni to challenge his succession. Instead he applied to the Native Commissioner for permission to take the name of his grandfather.[87]

Instead of dividing in civil war the whole country united against the European interlopers. Mpezeni alone tried to protect his friend Wiese. The effective cleavage was not between rival heirs but between the Paramount Chief and his people. He was now a man in his sixties who seemed not to want war and who perhaps benefited more than his people from the presents made by Europeans. The Ngoni people continued to believe and teach that fighting was the proper occupation for men. An attempt to exploit this cleavage was made in 1897 when Wiese, perhaps remembering his earlier attempt to serve Portugal and Britain simultaneously, offered his services to the B.S.A. Company. Forbes thought that if Wiese was given troops, he would be supported by Mpezeni, who would then be in a position to hold Nsingu and the Ngoni warriors in check.[88] But this plan was overtaken by events.

We saw in the previous chapter that the organization of the State was based on warfare, not only on war as an activity bringing prestige to successful warriors but also on war as a method of recruitment to the ever-widening segments of the residential system. Without warfare to eliminate the unsuccessful and to bring promotion and dependants to those who survived, the system could not keep going. It was in no sense inevitable that the Fort Jameson Ngoni and the British should fight; we have only to turn to the

[86] Gluckman, 'Kingdom of the Zulu', pp. 35-6, and *Malinowski's Sociological Theories*, pp. 19-20; Krige, *Social system of the Zulu*, p. 19.
[87] See pp. 139 *f.*
[88] Poole, *Native tribes*, p. 14.

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our task is to separate them out. Yet even in analysis we have to show how each field interlocks with the other two, how events in one field set up movements in others.

The material apparatus used in the various fields was distinct. The traditional processes were decided ultimately by resort to spears and shields. Portugal and Britain fought with artillery, embargoes, customs dues and treaties. The North Charterland fought its rivals with concessions, certificates of claim and share capital.[188] Mpezeni, who knew how to fight with spears, was asked to sign pieces of paper which would then be negotiable in a property system of which he knew nothing, and the manipulators of which knew little of him. The treaty-collectors imagined a patchwork of stationary chiefdoms spread over the region, each with a chief powerful enough to sell his country, whereas in fact there was only an unstable series of groups of shifting cultivators, each liable to attack from the migrating Ngoni.

Yet despite the differences in technique and despite the lack of knowledge of each other's systems of government, the various groups involved continued to pursue their own ends as best they could. Mpezeni may not have known what a flag was, yet the issue between Portugal and Britain was decided, and decided in Lisbon rather than in Ngoniland. The treaties may have been made beyond the competence, and the understanding, of the chiefs who signed them, and yet the B.S.A. Company did gain control of the country. Mpezeni never made his mark on a document, yet the North Charterland acquired its ten thousand square miles of land. On the other hand, the Ngoni regiments tried to win another battle like the others they had won before, and this time they failed. In consequence of the war of 1898 there was a revolution, a change of structural form, in Ngoni society, whereas in the histories of Portugal and Britain, and even of the B.S.A. Company, the event passed almost unnoticed.

In northern Nyasaland an analogous process of incorporation within a wider system was taking place. Here also there was an intruding European group and the same distant interest of the Nyasaland Administration. Yet in many ways the chain of events in northern Nyasaland was simpler than at Fort Jameson. In the north, there was only one set of resident Whites, the Livingstonia missionaries, there was no Wiese willing to play for both sides at once, and there was no North Charterland. In consequence the

[188] cf. Kuper, *African Aristocracy*, p. 24: 'Swazi were subjugated through concessions, a type of economic warfare eventually sanctioned by powerful European governments.'

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611 643 reigning lord of the segment. It is probable that in this instance the divergence of interest had been increased by the shooting of Nsingu, for Mpezeni II, son of Nsingu and grandson of Mpezeni I, was only a young boy and in the hands of guardians who were commoners and who might respond to pressure from their ward's father's paternal half-brother. So far as can be gathered from the published account of the meeting called by the Administration to [648] discuss the matter, the young Paramount was supported by the lords of segments 12, 14 and 17 and by the senior lieutenants of segment 10. He was opposed by the heads of segments 9, 13 and 16 and by the senior lieutenant of segment 4. Segment 15 seems not to have taken part in the dispute. Thus the main cleavage appears to have been between segments 10 and 12 on the one hand and the residue of 4 on the other. Segment 13, in terms of its structural position, was on the wrong side; this may have been connected with the fact that the regional governor of Mpezeni I who led segment 13 was born in the headquarters of segment 4. After a quarrel about succession to his father's office of lieutenant in that segment, he moved to segment 10 where he found favour with the chief and was later promoted to regional governor. In the 1903 dispute he apparently transferred his support back to his natal segment.[1]

The attempt to assume the name Zwangendaba failed. The young chief's supporters outnumbered their opponents at the meeting and his spokesmen argued that he had been recognised by all the other chiefs and by the Administration as Paramount of the whole Ngoni country. If his rival took the name he would be led to usurp the authority of the young Paramount. The Native Commissioner then ruled that the name could not be taken.

643 611 754 669 579 Throughout his reign Mpezeni II was opposed by a half-brother, a son of Nsingu by a different mother. This man was older than Mpezeni and claimed that his mother had really been Nsingu's great wife, or at least that Nsingu had intended to make her so before he was shot in 1898. This rivalry took two forms. He endeavoured to bring destruction to the chief and his cattle by sorcery, and on one occasion made what seems to have been a half-hearted attempt to kill him with a spear. At the same time he endeavoured to establish his own segment as a county of its own, and in this he was assisted by others who fancied themselves as chief of the proposed new county.[2] The sorcery failed, not only because it was merely sorcery, but also because sorcery and

[1] *N.R.R.G.G.J.*, 4 (1 August 1903). Supplement. See p. 35.
[2] See pp. 143 *f.*

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divination are not well developed among the Ngoni as means of influencing action. The attempt to establish a new county failed for lack of Administrative support. Chiefs still continue to express their rivalries through sorcery, and would-be chiefs still attempt to establish new counties.

When Mpezeni II died, his heir was still young and was out of the country at boarding-school. A minor chief, after quarrelling with one of the dead chief's lieutenants about the funeral arrangements, proposed that the heir should remain at school to finish his education and that meanwhile there should be a regency. However the Administration arranged for the immediate return of the heir.

The rivalry between the Paramount Chief and his minor chiefs shows itself in other less dramatic ways. Thus the Paramount Chief's advisers told me that all cases coming on appeal from the courts of minor chiefs were heard in the Paramount Chief's own court of first instance, and that only if the verdict given there was not accepted was the case referred to the Appeal Court which was held at the administrative centre of the Paramount Chief's county every month. The minor chief's and their advisers told me that cases sent on appeal from them went direct to the Native Appeal Court, and emphasized that this court was composed of several minor chiefs and their councillors, called upon in rotation. In practice, as I observed in the course of my work, sometimes one procedure was followed, sometimes the other.

On the other hand, the minor chiefs and other politically important people support the Paramount Chief in his relations with the Administration. When recently Ngoni thought that the Administration was not treating the Paramount Chief with the respect due to his position, two minor chiefs endeavoured to organize a petition to the Administration on the matter. When the Paramount Chief's deputy was put in prison by the Administration for embezzlement, it was a minor chief who protested most strongly to the Administration. However dissatisfied the minor chiefs and people may be with any particular Paramount Chief, there is little dissatisfaction with the Paramount Chieftainship. This is still the feature of their organization which in Ngoni eyes most clearly marks them off from their neighbours, and which most clearly links them in their present lowly condition to the exploits of their illustrious forefathers.

3. *The chief's advisers*

The men who advise the chief, who enjoy his confidence and his hospitality, belong to a number of different categories. In each

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sometimes held at the Paramount Chief's village. Each minor chief holds meetings for the people in his own county to discuss matters of common interest. 647

Quarrels among the chiefs are mainly in terms of the traditional norms rather than of the new differentiation between them in the Native Authority system. The Paramount Chief may abuse the minor chiefs for not coming to visit him on his return from a journey, or for not bringing beer with them when they come to visit him. In each county there are villages which claim to belong to the chief of some other county, on the ground that they originated from the capital village of that county. These interloping villages increase the pressure on the land of the county in which they are, and friction between the two chiefs concerned may ensue. The chiefs like to be able to offer new land for gardens to the people of their own villages, yet at the same time each chief likes to have as many villages as possible apparently under his sway. Hence there is competition both for the allegiance of the villagers as well as for the land that they occupy. These struggles may be resolved by the Paramount Chief or by the Administration with a redefinition of boundaries or by moving the interloping villages to some other region. The Administration has from time to time placed one county under the tutelage of the chief of another, on grounds of administrative efficiency or the inexperience of a young chief. These moves are interpreted as attempts by one chief to incorporate the county of the other into his own, and allegations of killing by sorcery may be made against one minor chief on the death of another. Attempts have also been made to usurp the paramountcy, but this cannot be done openly under the present régime. 628 [643] [648] [692] [669]

Efforts are also made by members of the royal lineage to achieve the creation of new chieftainships by asserting the traditional autonomy of the rural districts into which the counties are divided for certain purposes. Seen in relation to the old system, these attempts are efforts to increase the segmentation in that branch of the royal lineage which corresponds with the modern county in which they live. It is unlikely that such attempts will be successful, as the policy of the Administration is opposed to the creation of new chieftainships. 631 64

Sanctions

The principal check on the power of the minor chiefs is that exercised through the Paramount. The Administration, which is always 687 648